

The Writing on the Wall

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- prayer poem
- markers
- poster board
- glue
- self-adhesive magnets
- scissors



Scriptures

Dan 5:13-30

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God wants us to show respect to Him and to everything that belongs to Him

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify ways the students can show respect to God and His church

Memory Verse

"We ought to obey God." (Acts 5:29)



Bible Knowledge

King Belshazzar

King Belshazzar was the ruler of Babylon when it was captured in 539 BC by the Medes and Persians. His name means "Bel, protect the king!" In the Bible, Belshazzar is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 5:22). However, ancient records indicate that Belshazzar was named by his father Nabonidus, who was the king of Babylon between 556 and 539 BC. It is possible that Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, and so the terms son and father would not be completely out of context.

Daniel

Daniel means "God is my judge." He was an Israelite of royal descent. He was taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in the third year of Jehoiakim, with various companions trained for the king's service (Dan 1:1-6; also see previous lesson). Daniel successfully occupied leading governmental posts under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius.

The Writing on the Wall

King Belshazzar saw the words "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" on the wall. The word MENE means numbered. God had numbered the days of Belshazzar's kingdom. The word was likely repeated for emphasis. TEKEL means weighed. God had weighed the king's heart. He disobeyed God and did not measure up to His standards. The most blatant example was when King Belshazzar used the sacred vessels from God's temple at the feast. He showed complete disregard for the true God. Even Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself before God. But Belshazzar did not care. UPHARSIN means divided. It is the plural of PERES (Dan 5:28). The same night of the feast, Belshazzar was killed and his kingdom was taken by the Medes and Persians.



Understanding Your Students

Children at this age are apt to do some inappropriate things. For example, they might jump on someone's sofa. They might take another child's toy. They might spit out food they don't like eating. While we expect children to do these things, it doesn't make them acceptable. However, some parents just brush off these behaviors. They reason that the children are just too young to really know what they are doing. Kindergartners may be young, but there are still many rules and etiquette they are able to learn and follow. There are no excuses for jumping on someone's sofa, grabbing a toy, or spitting food out in public.

In order for young children to learn these rules, they need to be taught consistently. Don't wait for the situations to arise to react. For example, at meal times

at home, discuss what a child could do if he doesn't like the food he is eating. Talk about what the proper behaviors are when visiting a friend's house before the actual visit. If the child breaks the rules, there needs to be consequences. Otherwise, the rules will become void. If toys are a real issue, talk about which ones the child is comfortable sharing with friends so that when the time comes for the playdate, those toys can be shared.

Children are not too young to learn rules. They can also learn God's commands in a similar way. Discuss the commands and their everyday applications. That way, they won't be the TEN COMMANDMENTS, like they are ancient rules that can be forgotten. Talk about lying, observing the Sabbath, and honoring one's parents. These are commands that affect every child. When children are taught the rules, they will be able to follow them.



Vocabulary

Feast

to have a big meal, with a lot of food and drinks

Wisdom

to know right from wrong and what pleases God

Wise Men and Magicians

people who worked for the king; they gave the king advice

Proud

when someone thinks he is better than others



Before You Teach

Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his friends. It is hard to imagine such a large party. While we do not know the exact reasons for the occasion, we can be sure of one motivating factor: Belshazzar wanted to honor himself. He was the king of a vast kingdom, and what better way to tell the world than through feasting and drinking? He even made sure to show off God's gold and silver vessels from the temple. For a few hours, Belshazzar was definitely in the spotlight, honored and praised by all. But on that same night, his life was prematurely ended. Instead of giving honor to God, he honored himself.

Today, we need to be careful not to become proud or boastful. It is easy to attribute our success to our own efforts. We are the ones who are studying hard and working hard. Others may praise us

for our dedication and work. Of course it is nice to feel good about ourselves. But when we begin to think highly of ourselves and our abilities, we begin to lose sight of God. Over time, we will believe that we are the ones who are getting the work done and forget God.

There are many Bible characters who never forgot about God, and honored Him throughout their lives. Daniel is an excellent example. When King Belshazzar offered to give Daniel expensive gifts and make him the third ruler of the kingdom, Daniel refused the honor. He wasn't showing disrespect to the king. He wanted to make sure that all glory was given to God, for it was God who gave him the wisdom to interpret dreams and signs. He pointed out to Belshazzar that the very reason his life was going to end was because he disobeyed God and His commands. He made it very clear that God was the real king, the one worthy of all honor and praise. Let us remember to always to live to glorify God and His holy name.



Bible Story

In the last lesson, we learned that King Nebuchadnezzar built a great big statue. He wanted people to bow down to it whenever special music was played. Everyone in the kingdom obeyed the king and bowed. But Daniel's three friends did not. They knew they could only worship God. So King Nebuchadnezzar threw them into a fiery furnace. That is like a very hot oven. The king was amazed by what he saw. Not only did the three friends not die in the fire, there was another person with them. He looked like an angel. When King Nebuchadnezzar saw this, he told the friends to come out. They walked out and they did not even smell like smoke. That is amazing. Only God could do something so great. After that, even King Nebuchadnezzar said that all the people in the land should worship the true God.

Today, we are going to learn about another king. But this king did not worship God.

King Belshazzar Uses God's Cups

When King Nebuchadnezzar was alive, he gave Daniel and his three friends important jobs to do in the kingdom. This was because he knew they worshiped the true God. And God blessed Daniel and his friends. He made them wise so that they could help the king.

But kings do not live forever. One day, King Nebuchadnezzar died, and his son, Belshazzar became the new king. Belshazzar wasn't Daniel's friend. He was proud and he didn't obey God. Belshazzar liked to do things his own way instead of God's way.

One night, Belshazzar was having a feast for more than a thousand of his friends. They ate delicious food and drank a lot of wine. All the people were having a great time. As King Belshazzar drank his wine, he suddenly came up with an idea. He remembered that his father had taken the gold cups that had been in God's temple in Jerusalem to Babylon. Belshazzar thought that now would be the perfect time to take the cups out and use them for the wine. The cups were probably very beautiful. He wanted all of his friends to see how wonderful these cups looked. So he told his servants to get the gold

cups out.

Do you think this was a good idea? (Allow students to respond.) This was not a good idea. In fact, this was a bad idea. These cups weren't just regular cups, like the ones we use to drink water or juice. These were special cups used in God's temple. People were not allowed to just take them out and use them for drinking wine at a party. But King Belshazzar did not care. He didn't care about God or His temple. He only wanted to have a good time and show off the gold cups.

When the servants brought out the gold cups, Belshazzar told his friends to fill them with wine and drink from them. All of the king's friends were glad he had brought out the cups. They looked beautiful and they were happy to drink from them.

Strange Words Appear on the Wall

Belshazzar didn't care about obeying God. He only thought about himself and what he wanted. God knew the king had done something very wrong. God wanted to tell Belshazzar that he had disobeyed Him. As the king drank wine from a gold cup, he suddenly saw a hand appear. It just came out of the air, and the fingers wrote four words on the palace wall. King Belshazzar was very shocked and afraid. He had never seen anything like this before. He turned white and his knees shook. Where did the hand come from? There was no arm or body attached. And what did the strange words mean? He trembled with fear.

King Belshazzar called his wise men and magicians to come and look at the words. They were supposed to know a lot of things. But they couldn't explain the words. The king became more and more frightened. He even promised to make whoever could read the words rich and important. But no one knew what the words meant. Who could understand them?

When the queen heard what had happened, she told Belshazzar what to do.

"When Nebuchadnezzar was king, there was a man named Daniel who was his friend. Daniel was close to God, and God helped Daniel explain many difficult things. Daniel helped your father understand his dreams, and he made Daniel the chief of his wise men. If you call Daniel, he will tell you what the words mean," she said.

This sounded like a good plan to King

Belshazzar. Even though he didn't like Daniel, he really wanted to know what the words meant. So he called Daniel to the palace.

Daniel Explains the Words on the Wall

When Daniel arrived, the king said, "If you tell me what these strange words mean, I'll make you rich and you will be an important man."

Daniel shook his head.

"You can keep your gifts, O king. I will still read the writing and tell you what it means." Daniel didn't want the reward; he only wanted to worship God. Then Daniel looked carefully at the words. God gave Daniel wisdom to explain the words.

"O King, God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar great power and a mighty kingdom. When he became proud, God punished him. Then Nebuchadnezzar realized that God is the true ruler of everything, and he was sorry. He decided to worship and obey the Lord. You knew this. But did you worship and obey the Lord? No, you did not! You became proud, and you disobeyed God by drinking from the cups of God's temple. So God sent a hand to write on the wall to tell you a message."

The words on the wall said "Mene, mene, tekem, upharsin."

Daniel continued to speak. "These words mean you will no longer be king because God has

decided to end your kingdom. God will give it to the Medes and the Persians."

It was awful news and the king didn't like God's message. But he kept his promise and dressed Daniel in special clothes and put a gold chain around his neck. Daniel didn't care about this. He knew that Belshazzar's kingdom was going to be destroyed.

King Belshazzar Is Killed

Do you know what happened next? The Bible tells us that on that very night, Persian soldiers came into the city of Babylon. They killed Belshazzar and his guests, and the Persian King Darius sat on Belshazzar's throne. God's words came true. And do you know what happened to Daniel? Daniel became a friend of the Persian ruler. Even though he was old now, Daniel once again became one of the most important men in all the land.

Belshazzar was foolish not to obey God. He used the gold cups for his own fun. But Daniel was wise. Daniel knew it was right to obey God. Even though Daniel served different kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius) and was one of the most important men in the kingdom, he remembered God and continued to worship Him. This was why God blessed Daniel.

God will bless us too when we obey Him. We need to treat God and His things with respect. We need to obey His words and commands. Then God will be with us and we will be with Him.



Check For Understanding

1. **Who became king when Nebuchadnezzar died?** (Belshazzar.)
2. **What did King Belshazzar do at the feast that made God very unhappy?** (He took the gold cups from God's temple and drank wine from them.)
3. **Why was that such a bad thing to do?** (They weren't ordinary cups; people were not supposed to drink or eat from them.)
4. **What suddenly happened while the king and his friends were eating and drinking?**

(A hand appeared and wrote words on the wall.)

5. **Who explained the meaning of the words to the king?** (Daniel.)
6. **Why was Daniel able to explain the meaning of the words?** (God gave him wisdom to understand the words.)
7. **What did Daniel tell the king?** (He told the king that God had decided to end his kingdom and give it to another because he did not obey God.)
8. **What happened to King Belshazzar?** (He was killed that very night.)
9. **How should we treat God and His church?** (We need to obey God and respect His

things.)

10. What are some things in the church we need to respect? (We need to take care of

the Bibles and hymn books, we need to be quiet during service time, we need to walk in the chapel, etc.)



Life Application Story

Respecting God and His Church

One Sabbath morning, Lisa brought a friend to church. It was the first time Brittany had ever gone to a church. Lisa was excited because she had asked her friend many times and finally, Brittany was able to come. Lisa was hoping she could stay for junior class later on.

They arrived a little bit early, so the two girls sat at the back pew, chatting to themselves. All of a sudden, Jen came zooming past them and ran all the way to the front of the chapel. Then in a flash, she ran all the way back to the doors. As Jen was about to run again, Lisa stopped her.

"Jen, what are you doing?" Lisa asked.

"I am trying to hide from John," Jen answered. "We're playing hide and seek."

"First of all, we are not supposed to play hide and seek in the chapel. And you know you are not supposed to run. That is not respecting God and His church," Lisa explained.

"What is not respecting?" asked Jen.

"That means we don't care about what God thinks. Do you think God would like you to run around His church?" asked Lisa.

"No, but we are just playing. Kindergarten class hasn't started yet."

"I know, but it is not okay to run around. There are rules to follow in God's church," Lisa said once more.

"Okay, I will go and do something else," Jen replied as she walked out of the chapel.

"She is just a little kid," Brittany told Lisa. "She just wanted to have fun with her friends."

"I know, but my parents always told me that it is important to respect God. When I was younger I got into trouble for throwing around my Bible, playing tag in church, and talking during service. My parents said that when I do those things, it tells God that I don't really care about Him or His church," Lisa explained.

"I guess you are right. I just never thought of church like that," Brittany answered. "Maybe we should just stop talking now. I don't want God to be upset."

Lisa laughed.

"Well, we are pretty quiet and service hasn't started yet, so it's okay. Once we start singing, and praying, then we need to listen to the speaker."

"Thanks for telling me all these things," Brittany said.

"Oh, that reminds me. I need to tell you about the way we pray too," Lisa said. Then Lisa began to tell her friend all about praying in tongue.

Questions to Think About

- 1. How can we show respect to God in the church and outside of the church?** (Allow students to respond.)
- 2. Why is it important to respect God and His church?** (We want to show God we love Him and care about Him. When we care about something, we will try our best.)



Activity 1

The Writing On the Wall

Look at the pictures. Which one happened first? Put them in the right order.



Activity 2

Respecting God's House

What are the people doing to show they are respecting God's house, the church? Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences. Which ones can you do? Talk about the action words that are used in this worksheet. Demonstrate how each should

look and sound to help the students put them into action. Also discuss what it means to show respect.

1. We use quiet voices in church.
2. We sit on chapel pews.
3. We walk in the church.
4. We greet other brothers and sisters.



Activity 3

We Will Obey

Materials:

1. picture pattern
2. construction paper
3. markers or crayons
4. glue
5. scissors

Directions:

1. Provide a copy of the picture to each student.
2. Have them color in the picture. Talk about the importance of the memory verse as they color.
3. Glue the picture onto a piece of construction paper to make it more sturdy.
4. Hang their work in the room or encourage the students to bring their work home to display.

Activity 8:1

The Writing On the Wall

Look at the pictures. Which one happened first? Put them in the right order.



King dies that night.



The king has a feast and uses the cups from the temple.

MENE, MENE,
TEKEL
UPHARSIN



Daniel explains the writing.

MENE
MENE
TEKEL

UPHARSIN

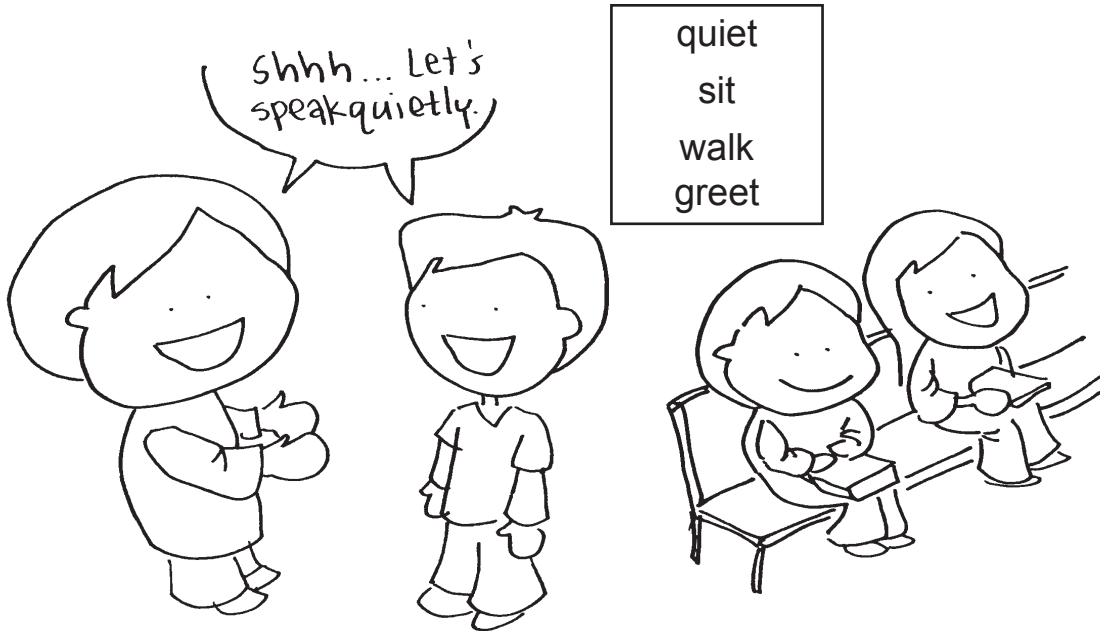


The king sees fingers drawing words on the wall.

Activity 8:2

Respecting God's House

What are the people doing to show they are respecting God's house, the church? Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences. Which ones can you do?



quiet
sit
walk
greet

1. We use q _ _ _ _ voices in church.

2. We s _ _ on chapel pews.



3. We w _ _ _ in the church.

4. We g _ _ _ _ other brothers and sisters.

Activity 8:3

